

PUBLIC HEARING

JANUARY 16, 2014

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kaua'i was called to order by Mason K. Chock, Sr., Chair, Finance & Economic Development (Tourism / Visitor Industry / Small Business Development / Sports & Recreation Development / Other Economic Development Areas) Committee, on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 2:42 p.m., at the Council Chambers, 4396 Rice Street, Room 201, Historic County Building, Līhu'e, and the presence of the following was noted:

Honorable Mason K. Chock, Sr.
Honorable Gary L. Hooser
Honorable Ross Kagawa
Honorable JoAnn A. Yukimura
Honorable Jay Furfaro

Excused: Honorable Tim Bynum
Honorable Mel Rapozo

The Clerk read the notice of the public hearing on the following:

"Bill No. 2517 – A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A NEW ARTICLE UNDER CHAPTER 22, KAUAI COUNTY CODE 1987, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED CAT LICENSING PROGRAM,"

which was passed on first reading and ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kaua'i on December 18, 2013, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on December 26, 2013.

The following communications were received for the record (*see Bill No. 2517 testimony log*):

1. Anderson, Gary
2. April, Alice
3. April, Rocco
4. Beer, Brandi
5. Boyle, Cornelia
6. Desiree
7. Dooley, Jeanne
8. Drews, Sheila
9. Everett, Carol
10. Everett, Mark A.
11. Harter, Marcia
12. Heathcote, Sheila
13. Hubbard, Scott
14. Ka'aumoana, Maka'ala
15. Lans, Rebecca
16. Leclair, Ellen
17. Lepczyk, Christopher A.
18. Norwood, Robert
19. Oda, Annette

- 20. Osterlund, Hob
- 21. Scott, Basil
- 22. Sizemore, Grant
- 23. Sloger, Dora
- 24. Sueoka, Margaret H.
- 25. Szczepanski, Gail
- 26. Zakula, Mary

The hearing proceeded as follows:

EDUARDO TOPENIO, JR., Administrative Assistant to the County Clerk: Committee Chair, we had twenty-six (26) written testimony received; twenty-two (22) support, two (2) opposed, and two (2) other. We have five (5) registered speakers at this time.

Mr. Chock: Thank you. May you please call the first speaker up?

Mr. Topenio: The first speaker is Basil Scott, followed by Michael Oda.

Mr. Chock: Thank you. Please state your name for the record.

There being no objections, the rules were suspended.

BASIL SCOTT: My name is Basil Scott. I am here representing Kaua'i Ferals, which is a 501(c)(3) and our sole purpose is to reduce the feral cat population on Kaua'i through humane, no-kill methods. We generally support this Bill. We think the idea behind it, to encourage spay and neuter, is excellent and would help the problem, but my comment is that I believe it should exempt feral cats. Feral cats in colonies (inaudible) in general to treat feral cats differently from pet cats or non-feral cats. I will discuss why I believe this should be the case. First, it would hurt ongoing successful activities just by draining money out of people's pockets and our organization, which would otherwise be used for traps, spay and neuter of cats, and every time we spay and neuter a cat; those are cats that are not born, reduces the population rate/birth rate, and thereby, reduces the population. We have been successful. In the past five (5) years, we have achieved forty-five percent (45%) reduction in feral cat populations in open areas that are subject to cat dumping and all of the problems that brings, so we feel that is a good record, about ten percent (10%) per year. But this, if we had to license those cats, it would cost us twenty-five percent (25%) of our operating budget, which would be over two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for us, and that would be money that could not be used for spay and neuter; therefore, it would reduce the total amount that we could do. On a Countywide basis, if it had a similar effect and the County had to pay for trapping and spay and neuter to replace us, it would cost you twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) approximately. This is monetized analysis based on financial rates from Penny, the Director of the Kaua'i Humane Society, and estimates of the work factor it takes to catch and trap. The second reason is that I do not believe it is the intent of Council to treat feral cats the same as pet cats. There was a Feral Cat Task Force set-up and a lot of energy, so I believe that it is the Council's intent to have these in separate categories. Thirdly, I do not believe it is the expectation or the desire of the Executive Director of the Kaua'i Humane Society, and I am sure she will speak, but in conversations I had with her,

this idea that feral cats will be exactly like pet cats, not in accordance with her expectations. Finally, I would note that feral cats are spayed, neutered, micro-chipped, and registered, so they do meet all of the requirements for identification that are put in. Really, my concern is about the financial impact and the fact that that financial impact would directly undermine the goal of reducing the population explosion of cats. I have two other general comments. First, for people who cannot afford spay and neuter, it would be an impact. I know there are funds available to mitigate that and that the Council has made those funds available. That needs to be publicized very loudly as you go forward on this; otherwise, people will look at this as an unavoidable cost impact and yet there is funding out there. Secondly, I think in the near-term, because of prohibition that will happen, you could actually have an increased number of cats euthanized before you get to where there are a lower number of cats euthanized. That is all my comments.

Mr. Chock: Are there any questions?

Ms. Yukimura: Yes. Hi, Basil. Thank you for being here. You said that there has been... what is the name of the group?

Mr. Scott: Kaua'i Ferals.

Ms. Yukimura: Kaua'i Ferals has achieved a forty-five percent (45%) reduction over the last...

Mr. Scott: Five (5) years. Since 2008, we have monitored the population of cat colonies that we keep. This is a group of cats in a physically almost contiguous area. The public does have access to this area and there are problems that result from that. But in 2008, there were one hundred eighteen (118) cats in ten (10) colonies and today there are sixty-five (65). We think that is a good record. I would note for the record that until we do something about the issue of dumping of unwanted cats, it is likely impossible to get to zero. That is just almost mathematically true. It is hard to avoid.

Ms. Yukimura: I have one more question. You are suggesting that the Bill be modified to exempt feral cats?

Mr. Scott: Yes. What exactly do you mean by that?

Ms. Yukimura: I think there are two (2) categories. The first category is a cat that is captured, not ear-tipped, which means that the Humane Society knows this cat is not part of a colony. Yet, the cat is clearly wild and feral. This Bill would require the Humane Society to hold that cat for forty-eight (48) hours. I do not believe that is the current practice and that would result in increased costs, if as the law is written, they were forced to do so, and they would be forced to do so as the law is written because there is no difference. The only cats that are exempted are show cats. That is the first category. The second category is cats that are ear-tipped and micro-chipped; therefore, known to be part of a feral cat colony. Here holding the cat so that the colony care giver can reclaim it is appropriate; however, the way the Humane Society manages that may potentially be different from the way they would manage a pet.

Ms. Yukimura: Is this not one of the issues that the Feral Cat Task Force will be looking at?

Mr. Scott: Which one? The second one or the first one?

Ms. Yukimura: Well, actually the treatment of both of these types of cats.

Mr. Scott: I presume it will be, but as you know, that report is not finished yet.

Ms. Yukimura: Right.

Mr. Scott: I think that is another kind of a complicating factor is that you have an effort ongoing to define policy and so forth, so if this Bill covers feral cats, it may conflict with what you would want to do in any further actions regarding feral cats. Yet, if you make an exemption in this Bill regarding feral cats, in some way you beg the question; you have prematurely done something prior to the report being received from the task force. I understand that it is not easy to do this or easy to make a clear call, but since the Council spent thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) on trying to figure out what to do with feral cats, it is my belief that the intention or the understanding was that it would be something different from what would be done with pet cats. That is my comment.

Ms. Yukimura: Just so you know, the origin of this Bill was so that cats could begin to pay their way. Right now, the Humane Society gets license fees only from dogs, but they take care of more cats than they take care of dogs.

Mr. Scott: I know.

Ms. Yukimura: So we need to find a source of revenue, and then maybe amend the Bill after we get recommendations from the Feral Cats Task Force.

Mr. Scott: Just noting, I think you will lose more than you gain if you accept a monetized analysis because I think for an organization like ours, it is two thousand dollars (\$2,000) that we would not have to pursue our main objective.

Ms. Yukimura: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chock: You have one more question.

Chair Furfaro: I just want to clarify your statement that the County has made money available for spay and neutering feral cats.

Mr. Scott: I did not say that.

Chair Furfaro: I am sorry. I thought I heard that. I actually thought I heard that, so I am glad you clarified. What we made money available for was a task force.

Mr. Scott: Yes. I made two comments actually. Let me clarify that.

Chair Furfaro: Please do.

Mr. Scott: Maybe they blurred together. The County made money available for a Feral Cat Task Force to study and prepare recommendations.

Chair Furfaro: Yes, to define some programs and create policies and strategies on the issue; that is what we funded.

Mr. Scott: Correct. Separately however, it is my understanding that the County made available funds for spay and neuter, restricted from feral cats, so these funds cannot be used for feral cats.

Chair Furfaro: That is the money we are referring to that we granted to the Humane Society.

Mr. Scott: Yes, Sir.

Chair Furfaro: I just wanted to clarify that.

Mr. Scott: Correct. For the purpose of someone who comes in and cannot afford the bill, they have a way to still comply. It was my comment that that should be publicized. I believe there is misunderstanding and people do not know that this is available. Knowing that it is available would reduce the amount of pushback you may get, so I just think that was important to bring up.

Chair Furfaro: I agree with that. It is a strong point for the Humane Society to put their message out on their vision and their mission.

Mr. Scott: Right.

Chair Furfaro: That is where we provided the money.

Mr. Scott: Also, you guys are not the bad guys either because you have provided that, recognizing the need.

Chair Furfaro: I never thought of myself as a "bad guy."

Mr. Scott: I know.

Chair Furfaro: I just wanted to make sure that you understood the clarification on the moneys that were allocated.

Mr. Scott: Yes, Sir. I understand.

Chair Furfaro: Seems like we are on the right page now.
Thank you for your clarifications.

Mr. Scott: Thank you.

Mr. Topenio: The next speaker is Michael Oda, followed by Anne Punohu.

MICHAEL ODA: Hi, my name is Michael Oda. The subject is cats again. How do you determine how many feral cats there are from Kekaha,

across Lihū'e to Hā'ena. How do you measure that? Is someone going to go around and count the number of feral cat colonies? Anyway, the cats are very unique animals like many other species on this Earth. If you have read history, many of them have gone extinct and they are accelerating to be extinct in the sea, land, and the air; I have read some things. Anyway... in the past... I will give a little history. In the past, I did not like cats for some reason because my house had dogs and I did not like cats. I was biased. I believe that the Lord has sent the cat to my home. As I took care of the cat, a stray cat, I have found that the cat is just as smart as dogs and other animals like birds and things. They have the unique thing about how they were created. Their condition on this Earth is accelerating due to climate change. As the warming of the Earth, you have convection in the ocean, changing the habitat from the bottom of the ocean... you have convection changes on the land changing the habitats of food supplies and microorganisms and different things are arising. They could go extinct— cats and dogs, whether you believe it or not. I am certain of this because of what has happened and what is happening through history. We have not changed our ways into how we should treat the animals. Even people who claim to be experts or people who at least try, but they have not stopped the extinction of organisms on this Earth. I know the cat can potentially be extinct on this Earth, whether you can conceive that and even a dog, whether you can believe that. That is all I have for today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chock:

Thank you, Mr. Oda.

Chair Furfaro: I have a question. I just want to respond to you on a couple of things. I have a little experience on this based on the nature of my occupation "pre-Council." You asked how we will measure and how do we identify— I am sorry to use this very cruel term, but it is "dumping sites" where people bring unwanted kittens and so forth. Unfortunately, they would dump them. Also, measure these colonies that are in some of the bird habitat and so forth. For many years, almost thirteen (13), I worked very closely with Judy from Kaua'i Beach Villas in trying to understand the problem and how we, for lack of any other term, do a census. I guess my biggest concern in this is understanding that if we push for cat licensing, because people will not be able to have their pets adopted and so forth, I am concerned that we may actually find more dumping sites. I just talked with Judy last week and there has been an increase around the Nukoli'i area and so forth because people are concerned with the consequence of the licensing fee. I just want to let you know that you made some good points. I do not have the answers, but there has been some identification of these consequences with the cat populations. I think we have a long way to go yet. That is one of the reasons why we funded the task force because we want to get that kind of information. I am just trying to answer your question the best I can.

Mr. Oda:
of thing, but...

I am not trying to start a back and forth kind

Chair Furfaro: I was not either. I was just answering your question. The question was "how do we know..."

Mr. Oda: The birds at Kilauea— cats do not just attack anything. They do not eat all of the different kinds of birds because all of the creatures eat certain things unless the supply is so minimal. Just like you— if you do not have food, you are going to find something that you can eat; just like animals, it is the same thing. They find Seagulls in the garbage dump and it is not even an ocean, but anyway...

Chair Furfaro: I do not want to do a back and forth with you, but I want you to know that this Council has had testimony on the Bird Sanctuary from the Kilauea Wildlife Sanctuary and they have shared photographs with us about young chicks being attacked and so forth. I am just trying to answer your question of "how do we know?" Well, we have had those kind of resources made available to us. All I am trying to do is answer your question.

Mr. Chock: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Oda.

Mr. Oda: Okay.

Chair Furfaro: If you would like to visit with me, I would be glad to share those reports with you.

Mr. Oda: Thank you very much, Mr. Furfaro.

Chair Furfaro: You are quite welcome.

Mr. Topenio: The next speaker is Anne Punohu, followed by Penny Cistaro.

ANNE PUNOHU: Aloha, Council. My name is Anne Punohu. Like a lot of people in the community, when I heard there was cat licensing, I giggled. I was thinking, "What is next?" Centipedes? Rats? Chickens? Chickens would not even know if there were being ordinance against. I understand the issue about feral cat populations and I understand the importance of making sure that cats are not attacking our endangered birds. I am all for that not happening. However, with both of these ordinances, I must tell you that you are putting the cart before the horse. You need numbers and statistics. Now there is a task force for the feral cat population and it has not concluded its findings; therefore, we are here prematurely. I also see another potential for issues with neighbors and cats. Let us look at a scenario here; a cat owner has done everything that they are supposed to under this ordinance. Then unfortunately for the cat, the cat somehow gets out the house, goes into the neighbor's yard, and kills a sparrow. Now the neighbor sees the cat killing the sparrow, gets upset, knows the cat is licensed, finds out who the owner is, and then the owner is in "big *kimchee*." When I look at these issues, I look at them at far-ranging implications here. I hate to always be like this when I get up here, but honestly, I always think of how it is going to hurt the average person, what kind of a burden it is going to be on the average person on Kaua'i, even though it was just trying to get up and do their life and not get into trouble for anything. It seems to be harder and harder to not get in trouble for something, so as far as the cat license ordinance goes, I agree with the Kaua'i Humane Society's position that they should be reimbursed for services given to the community in regards to cat ownership functions. I one hundred percent (100%) agree with that; however, like Mr. Furfaro have just said and also Mr. Oda, he just made a brilliant point— in both of these situations, you may be looking at an increase of animals actually being dumped in the community because people on Kaua'i, especially people who are born and raised here or have been here a long time, do not want to get into trouble for anything. That is just how our society is. If we think we are going to, we will get rid of it, whatever it is. We will dump a car if we think we are going to get in trouble. We will dump a cat and dump a dog; we panic that way. I think there are a lot of people who feel that way out in the community. Another issue that I really want you guys to think about is as you were

doing a Feral Cat Task Force, you should be doing a "Feral Rat Task Force" because if you get rid of all of the feral cats, you will have a lot more rats than you thought you would. When the cats came here, the rats came here; they came at the same time. You need to think about that. That is a serious health problem and a serious health risk issue. *Mahalo.*

Mr. Chock: Thank you. Are there any clarifying questions, Councilmembers? If not, next speaker please.

Mr. Topenio: The next speaker is Penny Cistaro, followed by Jo Steciuk.

PENNY CISTARO: Penny Cistaro, Kaua'i Humane Society. We have just done an annual meeting and we did a six (6) month review of our statistics for our first six (6) months of the Fiscal Year. We have received one thousand nine hundred eighty-two (1,982) stray animals; seven hundred twenty-six (726) of those were dogs and one thousand two hundred fifty-six (1,256) were cats. Forty-four percent (44%) of the stray dogs were redeemed by owners and six percent (6%) of the cats were redeemed. Yes, that low. When I spoke with Council back at the beginning of 2012 when I had only been here for a very short period of time, I told Council that cats are the bigger problem in the community and cats continue to be the bigger problem in the community. It is a much more expensive problem for us at this point in time than dogs. We are receiving far more cats into the shelter than dogs and we are on track to receive about two thousand five hundred (2,500) cats this year. We do support cat licensing because it brings responsibility to cat owners the same way it does for a dog owner. We are asking that cats be licensed and if they are allowed to be free, outside the home, that they be spayed or neutered. It is not a leash law for cats. It is not stopping any movements of cats. It is just asking that they not be able to contribute to the overpopulation problem of cats. Feral cats were intentionally not included in this ordinance because of the Feral Cat Task Force and the recommendations that will be coming out the Feral Cat Task Force. I am on the task force and we are addressing feral cats separately from domestic cats. You had mentioned cats being dumped. Cats are being dumped where feral cats are being fed because the person feels that they are going to get fed there. If a domestic cat, a socialized cat, comes into the shelter, it has an opportunity to be placed into a new home. The feral cat population is much greater than the domestic or socialized cat coming into the shelter and we are looking to address that population with the licensing ordinance. The licensing ordinance will not have an effect on the feral cat population, so it is a completely separate issue. When we did discuss the dog licensing, the community spoke about cat owners taking responsibility for the animals and paying into the program, as well as they are. That is kind of the genesis of where this ordinance came from. I am sure you are well-aware of those meetings.

Mr. Chock: Are there any questions?

Mr. Kagawa: Yes. Penny, I just have a clarifying question. First of all, I want to say you are our doer. You have a tough job and you do not sit back. When we ask you for solutions— that is why we have these types of Bills because you are a doer, so I want to thank you for that.

Ms. Cistaro: Thank you.

Mr. Kagawa: You said two thousand five hundred (2,500) cats?

Ms. Cistaro: We are on target to receive two thousand five hundred (2,500) cats for this Fiscal Year.

Mr. Kagawa: How many dogs do you expect?

Ms. Cistaro: I think we based our budget on one thousand six hundred (1,600) dogs and two thousand five hundred (2,500) cats.

Mr. Kagawa: Is that going up for cats?

Ms. Cistaro: Last year, cats were two thousand four hundred (2,400) and something.

Mr. Kagawa: Okay, so pretty consistent.

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. Right now, we are at one thousand two hundred fifty-six (1,256) for cats coming in after six (6) months.

Mr. Kagawa: About six percent (6%) may be redeemed?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. Six percent (6%) of the cats for the first six (6) months were redeemed.

Mr. Kagawa: Wow.

Ms. Cistaro: Forty-four percent (44%) of the dogs were redeemed. We had seven hundred twenty-six (726) stray dogs come into the shelter. Last year, I think we received one thousand five hundred eighty-seven (1,587) stray dogs and a total of fifty-six percent (56%) of those stray dogs were redeemed and last year, ten percent (10%) of the cats were redeemed. I think that came out to be two hundred sixty-one (261) cats.

Mr. Kagawa: We expect the cats that are redeemed, the six percent (6%), are probably those cats like the ones I had when I was young which they are not housecats. We feed them, they roam, and they come for all of their two (2) or three (3) meals. Those are the types that come in and get redeemed, right?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Mr. Kagawa: Because housecats are not part of the six percent (6%). Housecats basically stay in the house, right?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes, but sometimes someone's cat get out and gets lost. Those also come into the shelter and those do get redeemed. This is your cat, he comes in, he goes out, and something happens, he wanders off...

Mr. Kagawa: Okay, so you are saying that some cats are in and out?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. If a feral cat comes into the shelter and it has an ear notch, which the ear notch is done when the spay or neuter surgery

occurs; if an ear notched cat comes in, we know that feral has been spayed or neutered, it will have a microchip, and we will get it back to the colony caretaker.

Mr. Kagawa: This is where I was going because this was brought up to me by somebody in the community; "Why would somebody that has a housecat need to get it licensed because it only stays in the house?" But you kind of clarified that some cats are in and out.

Ms. Cistaro: I have strictly indoor cats and at times, my cat has gotten outside.

Mr. Kagawa: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chock: Are there any more questions?
Councilmember Hooser.

Mr. Hooser: Yes. Thank you for your knowledge and for all the work that you are doing. My question kind of follows what was stated by the earlier speaker, "I do not know if I own my cat or not." We had feral cats. I call a "wild cat" a "feral cat," so we had wildcats. My wife got a trap, trapped it, and took it down to get it spayed/neutered, brought it back home, and released it. We feed it most of the time. Sometimes it eats at other places, but most of the time it eats at our house. We do not really have a social relationship with it too much, other than that. Is that a pet or is that a feral cat? Would that be subject to the licensing fee? What is your understanding of how the ordinance would work?

Ms. Cistaro: This has exempted what we are referring to as "feral cats." If there is a caretaker for a feral, that would be addressed when we come back from the Feral Cat Task Force; that is not being addressed in this ordinance.

Mr. Hooser: Would my cat, if you would, be a feral cat or pet?

Ms. Cistaro: That is the decision that is going to be made during the feral cat discussion because if it is not...

Mr. Hooser: The ordinance is before us though.

Ms. Cistaro: Have you micro-chipped that cat? Is that cat registered to you?

Mr. Hooser: I do not know. Is that automatic when it was spayed/neutered?

Ms. Cistaro: It is not automatic. It probably was done. Is his ear notched?

Mr. Hooser: I do not know. I do not have a whole lot to do with him.

Chair Furfaro: He does not have a social relationship with the cat.

Ms. Cistaro: I am seeing that.

Mr. Hooser: Okay. Thank you. With all kidding aside, I think a lot of people have these kinds of situations.

Ms. Cistaro: Those are the issues that we will be addressing with the feral cat issue because that cat, as well as cats that are allowed to go outdoors and free-roam, is what is having an impact on our native wildlife population and contributing to other problems. Our goal is that people that have a cat that they allow to wander freely, take responsibility, and have that cat spayed or neutered. If this is their personal pet, then that cat should be licensed. If you did not consider this cat your personal pet, it would not fall into this ordinance and that is my understanding.

Mr. Hooser: Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chock: Council Chair.

Chair Furfaro: Yes, thank you, Penny. There a couple of things that I want to rewind here. When I gave support for the task force or the money for the task force, we had some discussion about the other wildlife and making sure that we were going to include people from Fish and Wildlife.

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. There is quite a number. There is Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)...

Chair Furfaro: Could I get a list of that?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Chair Furfaro: Secondly, is there a clear definition now and before you come back to make a presentation to us on what defines a "colony caretaker."

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Chair Furfaro: Could we get those two parts in advanced?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Chair Furfaro: I was recently at my family home in Makaha and they are going through similar issues as we are going through in Kilauea Point. There are parts of Ka'ena Point that they fenced to protect the birds and so forth. Are there people from the Federal Wildlife?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Chair Furfaro: Are they talking about that cost as being part of their preservation program? Their costs?

Ms. Cistaro: They are not talking about "their costs."

Chair Furfaro: Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Cistaro: They are talking about "our costs."

Chair Furfaro: Thank you.

Ms. Cistaro: Just a point of clarification for me, we do strongly advertise the Spray/Neuter Assistance Program. We have PSAs. It is in all of our publications on our website and we are always on the radio.

Chair Furfaro: Thank you.

Mr. Chock: Are there any more questions?

Ms. Yukimura: You said that you are on track to process or handle two thousand five hundred (2,500) cats per year, both pets and feral.

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Ms. Yukimura: What is the cost of that to the Humane Society?

Ms. Cistaro: The budget that we presented last year had a figure of approximately three hundred forty thousand dollars (\$340,000) for handling cats.

Ms. Yukimura: What is the cost of handling the feral cats?

Ms. Cistaro: We are projecting that cost is about two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) of that and that is an approximate. In looking at our feral numbers and the budget that we are submitting for the cat licensing, looking at the one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) that Council increased our budget last year, and then approximately twenty-two thousand dollars (\$22,000) revenue—it is probably about one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to one hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$170,000) for the feral cat piece of it.

Ms. Yukimura: Okay. This Bill is, as was stated at the beginning of the hearing, partly intended to have cats and cat owners pay for their share of the cost because dog owners right now are funding... that is the only place where we are getting fees from right now. I know that it is going to take time for this if we pass the Bill into law. It is going to take time for the system to kind of rev up to its potential, but what are the estimated amounts we would expect in the first year?

Ms. Cistaro: Revenue?

Ms. Yukimura: From the revenue... from the fees?

Ms. Cistaro: From the fees that are in the ordinance, we anticipate around twenty-three thousand dollars (\$23,000) and that is a low licensing fee for the first year.

Ms. Yukimura: It will be paid for primarily by owners of pets, right?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. Every cat that we adopt out and will be licensed and there will be revenue from that. Then there are the cats that come through the spay/neuter clinic that will be licensed. We are estimating that we will be able to target about five hundred (500) individuals, just members of the public, through the licensing program.

Ms. Yukimura: One of the questions is, "Who pays for the feral cats?"

Ms. Cistaro: Well, currently the Humane Society is paying for the feral cats because the contract does not cover that.

Ms. Yukimura: That will be part of the discussion of the Feral Cats Task Force. Whatever the remedies or solutions for that issue, the question will be who pays?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Ms. Yukimura: "How will we pay for it?"

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Ms. Yukimura: Okay. For now, the Bill proposes to put in place a system that begins to have those owners who use the cat support that the Humane Society gives—when there is a lost cat, they can come back, and check if it has been found through the chip system or whatever, and then people who want pets can come and get a spayed or neutered cat.

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Ms. Yukimura: Those services will begin to be paid for?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. It is also an educational tool to increase awareness that people, if you have animals, need to take responsibility for them. It is raising people's level of awareness or consciousness for cats as well.

Ms. Yukimura: I have one last question. Honolulu has a cat problem, too, in terms of the public health and safety. Cats, if they are overpopulated, do create a problem for the public.

Ms. Cistaro: There can be, yes.

Ms. Yukimura: I am hearing about the University of Hawai'i where there are sanitation problems and so forth.

Ms. Cistaro: There can be depending upon the volume of a feral cat colony or stray cat population depending upon where it is and how it is being maintained.

Ms. Yukimura: Okay. Those are the questions that we can defer to the Feral Cat Task Force when they come back with their recommendations.

Ms. Cistaro: Yes.

Ms. Yukimura:

Thank you.

Ms. Chock: Are there any other questions, Councilmembers? I do have one. Can you clarify when we can hear back from the Feral Cat Task Force?

Ms. Cistaro: Our next meeting is in February... I believe it is February 10, and that is scheduled to be our last meeting where we are putting the final documents together for the recommendations to come to Council.

Ms. Yukimura: I have a follow-up to that. You are looking for a consensus or some kind of comprehensive solution to the feral cat issue. If you do not do it in one more meeting, is there a chance of an extended effort?

Ms. Cistaro: We have committed to coming to an agreement whether it is at the February 10 meeting or then moving forward.

Chair Furfaro: Let me give some clarification to that. That money was in the 2013 Budget. We are coming up on the next budget cycle. I think there is an expectation from us that we will see the presentation before we get into another budget cycle?

Ms. Cistaro: Yes. It is our hope that we are done with that task force and that our recommendations come forward. It has been many, many months.

Chair Furfaro: I just had to share that with you because I do not want you to be expecting any additional grant money or anything.

Ms. Cistaro: No. We are not expecting any additional grant money.

Chair Furfaro: Okay. I just want to make it clear. There is nothing wrong with people understanding. We would like to see the conclusion of the 2013 piece. Thank you.

Mr. Topenio: The next speaker is Jo Steciuk, followed by Margaret Sueoka.

JO STECIUK: Hello again. We do have a cat. We have had dogs, but we currently have a cat.

Mr. Chock: Can you please state your name again?

Ms. Steciuk: I am sorry. My name is Josephine Steciuk from Kalāheo, speaking on behalf of myself and my husband Michael. We do have a kitty. She is a pound kitty, so she was chipped, altered, shot, and everything. We keep her regular. I had one thing that I wanted to bring up, but as I am hearing people, all of these things are popping up in my head. I do not mind paying a fee. That is not the point. I do not mind paying for a license fee for her, but I am thinking that because they have to be chipped, it is almost like double taxation. You pay to get your cat chipped because it is identification (ID), and then you pay to get your cat licensed as an ID. The chip actually works better because you run the

scanner over it pops up the information that you need. That is just something that occurred to me, but it does not really apply to me because if you want me to pay a fee, that is fine. About the feral cat population, I was wondering of the numbers that Penny gave; how many of those two thousand five hundred (2,500) cats were euthanized. I was recently volunteering in the surgery there and I did not want to be involved with euthanization, but I could not help to hear and know that so many animals were euthanized. I was shocked actually and I was curious if Penny could provide the answers for the amount of dogs and cats that are euthanized. Lastly, our cat does not currently wear a collar. We tried to have a collar on her. I do not know whether, and that is a question for you; if we have a license for the cat, does the cat have to wear a collar? No? You are shaking your head JoAnn. Okay, because that is a problem for some cats. She will itch and scratch until she is raw. She will tear it off. We buy the ones that break if they get hung in the tree, so that would be a concern. I would hate to think that we would pass something that would contribute to more kitties having to be euthanized or growing of feral populations. There was one other thing— what was it? My brain does not work the way it used to. Okay, I guess I cannot remember that, but I mainly wanted to make sure that we do not have to put a collar on her.

Ms. Yukimura: Chair, just to clarify, in the Bill itself... because we discussed this in our drafting committee, but it does not require a collar. License means either a collar or a microchip.

Ms. Steciuk: Okay. The microchip serves as a license.

Ms. Yukimura: Initially, you have to get it licensed and once you do that...

Ms. Steciuk: But do you understand my thought about double taxation with the chip and the license?

Ms. Yukimura: I see Penny shaking her head. We will clarify that. Those who have a chip now, because we have not had a licensing program in place, may have to come and get their cat licensed. When people come to get their cat licensed, they can get a microchip.

Ms. Steciuk: I just remembered the last thing. In California— I do not know if many states have this, but you can drop off a baby... somebody who had dumped the baby in the trash.

Ms. Yukimura: A kitten?

Ms. Steciuk: No, a human baby— I am sorry. But somebody dropped the baby at a Fire Station and there is a “no questions asked” policy. That is what we do for people that would otherwise maybe dispose of a newborn in the trash. These feral cats that are being dumped now... if we had something like that where there are no questions asked and you can dump them at the Humane Society or at the Police Station or Fire Station, and you will not be bothered any further; that might be a way to at least get them neutered and chipped.

Mr. Chock: Thank you.

Mr. Topenio:
Sueoka.

Our last registered speaker is Margaret

MARGARET SUEOKA: Good afternoon. I just wanted to briefly talk about the abandonment issue. I did present written testimony. I do not know if you have had a chance to see it. I would be very surprised if people are beginning to abandon more cats already because in anticipation of this Bill. People abandon routinely anyway. I do not think this Bill is having that effect yet. I have heard a number of reasons from people of why they do it. They think cats are wild animals and can survive wherever you put them. Their neighbor has too many cats, so they take it upon themselves to remove them. Anything like that. A cat has behavioral problems, so they take it somewhere. It is too far to go to the Humane Society. They have always just abandoned... whatever it is. Abandonment will be with us for a long time until we can raise the status of cats to a true companion animal so they begin to get a little more respect. Thank you

Chair Furfaro: Margaret, I just want you to know that that discussion occurred when I was meeting with Judy and people from the Sierra Club. That red flag went up.

Ms. Sueoka: If it did happen, I would imagine after the law goes into effect and it was publicized. To say that it is happening now surprises me. I think that maybe we are heading into kitten season, she is seeing more, and I have noticed that once people begin to find a place where they see a lot of cats, they feel it is a great place to bring more.

Chair Furfaro: Thank you for using the term "abandonment" versus my term of "drop-off." That was what was implied to me in that discussion.

Mr. Chock: Councilmember Yukimura.

Ms. Yukimura: I just want to tell you that we did receive your testimony.

Ms. Sueoka: Thank you.

Ms. Yukimura: Thank you very much and thank you for your help.

Mr. Chock: Thank you. Does that conclude our speakers?

Mr. Topenio: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chock: Would anyone who has not spoken yet like to at this moment? Please come up.

Ms. Parker: Alice Parker. As far as cats go, I think there are some diseases that are cross-species and can be transmitted. I like the fact that Councilmember Yukimura brought up where there could be possible human contamination from cats or dogs, but especially cats. I worked with a woman in Los Angeles who had four (4) cats. They were house cats. They had cat fever and they clawed her so severely that she got an infection and lost the use of her arm. She

still has the cats, but she could no longer use her arm except somewhat. Now that is a rare circumstance, but cats can be aggressive and they can carry disease. There are a couple of cats that the Garden Island people feed... I think it is Wednesday and Sam are the cats' names. One followed us home as I was walking my dog and wanted to attack the dog. My dog is ten (10) pounds and the cat is probably fifteen (15) pounds, but I am holding the dog and throwing plastic at the cat to get the cat away, so we need control for wildcats. Thank you.

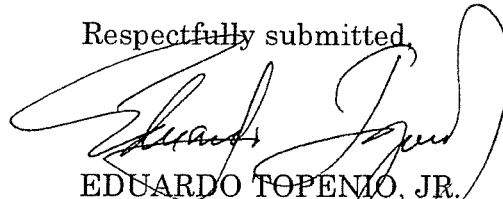
Mr. Chock: Thank you. Are there any questions, members? Anyone from the public? Please come up.

Ms. Punohu: I would also like you to consider one more thing. No matter what you do, if you license a cat, care for the feral cat populations, or if they are spayed or neutered or whatever, it will not stop a cat from attacking a bird. If you are looking at protecting endangered native bird species, which I am one hundred percent (100%) for, you need to look more at fencing and other kinds of enforcement measures because nothing that you heard today is going to stop that. I think that is what people think about first when they think about roaming cats or feral cat populations. The licensing fee— when I hear the numbers, it seems to be minimalistic as far as taking care of the needs of the Kaua'i Humane Society to effectively have enough funds to deal with the feral cat population which seems to be the majority of the issue. Another thing that I am going to reiterate yet again since we brought up diseases, as did this lovely Auntie next door; the diseases that a rat carries is lethal to humans. The diseases that cats carry are bad, but they can be minimized. I still believe, as a resident of this island for a very, very long time, that I would much rather be attacked by a cat than by a rat. *Mahalo*.

Mr. Chock: Thank you so much. If there are no other speakers, we will conclude this public hearing and move to the next. Thank you.

The meeting was called back to order, and there being no further testimony on this matter, the public hearing adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



EDUARDO TOPENIO, JR.
Administrative Assistant to the County Clerk